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WAYS OF ENTERTAINING CONVALESCING CHILDREN

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It is not at the really serious stage of an illness that the mother or nurse in charge of a sick child finds the work most arduous. Great as may be the anxiety at this early time, there is none of the wear and tear that come later, when the small boy or girl begins to recover and look for entertainment.

How many a loving but tired mother has racked her brains for some new amusement that will keep the little one cheerful, without overtaxing his strength! All the old toys have grown tiresome, and he wants something new.

One way to interest a child is to make up little games or tell stories in which he has to take a part himself. Tell him, for instance, to think of all the animals he can whose names begin with "A," and that you will tell him a story about each of them. Then he must find all beginning with "B," and so on through the alphabet. This can be a collection of very simple stories, and yet be made interesting for many hours.

Another unfailing source of interest to a boy is cutting rows of soldiers out of paper, making often quite an army. There need not be any great accuracy in the cutting; just fold the paper several times and show him how to cut out a figure with some resemblance to a man. His imagination will do the rest, for children always enjoy "making believe."

In the case of a little girl, this amusement may be varied by cutting out ordinary men and women instead of soldiers, and having parties, weddings, and other society functions.

A child with artistic tendencies will find different colored papers most entertaining, and will gladly spend much time in combining colors and shapes.

Some children enjoy very much the stringing of colored beads and making chains of squash, pumpkin and watermelon seeds that have been saved and made soft by soaking in water.

For a child who has some skill in drawing, simple map drawing is entertaining. If he is not able to draw maps himself, a transparent slate will serve very well. The little transparent slates are a delight to many children whether they use maps or simple pictures. Even where there is contagion one can use them, for they are quite inexpensive, and most people hesitate to buy valuable toys to be thrown away after a few weeks.

Have the child make a large stock of money of all kinds, round coins, as nearly as possible with the markings of real ones, or with just their value written on them, and some one and two-dollar bills.

It is not really necessary to have anything to sell, the imagination will do for that, but if the child is anxious to have something to sell, let him make things out of paper or use any of the articles in his room. One day it may be a grocer's and another day a dry goods shop. Then sometimes be the shopkeeper yourself and occasionally give him the wrong change and make him find it out for himself.

Story-telling will also be good amusement. To make up a story, take a number of magazines and cut out different pictures which can be pasted into a scrap book or on heavy paper. Begin the story something like this: "Once there were a father and mother and their two little boys." Then stop to find a picture of a house for them to live in; sometimes it may be a big farmhouse, sometimes a beach cottage or a city home. If it is out in the country, hunt for a picture of a barn and all the animals that belong to a farm. After they are all pasted neatly, continue the story, illustrating as you go on. Have them go on a picnic and find pictures of what they carry for their luncheon.

Another game which may be enjoyed is "Hide and Seek." Close your eyes and let the child make-believe-hide somewhere in the room. Then you ask, "Somewhere in this room?" "Yes." "Behind the door?" "No, you're cold." "Under the bed?" "No, you're still cold." And so on, until you get it right.

After all, the most important object of one's efforts is the entertainment of the convalescent child, so the first thing to keep in view is what will most distract his mind. To a mother, it is generally easy to know which line to pursue from her familiarity with his tastes. The nurse will soon be able to observe where a child's tastes lie and may adopt any of these suggestions to get him interested, remembering always to make him do as large a share as possible of the thinking and the planning, as well as of the work.

FOOT TROUBLES

When foot troubles arise the first thought should be—what has caused this condition? It is folly to patronize a chiropodist for conditions that will often disappear spontaneously if proper shoes are worn. If there is any obstinate or serious trouble with the feet, which apparently bears no relation to the footgear, see a surgeon or an orthopedist. Painful feet may be a manifestation of infection in the mouth, of a root abscess or of infected tonsils. It is extremely important to investigate such possible sources of trouble when the joints of the feet are inflamed or painful. A very moderate degree of foot strain in a person who is infected or sensitized by an unhealthy general condition may be sufficient to cause foot pain and joint trouble.—From the Monthly Health Letter, issued by The Life Extension Institute, Inc.